

I am proud that all of you are working with us to achieve that goal. And if we keep working, I still think we will get it done.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Thomas J. Scotto, president, National Association of Police Organizations, who introduced the President; Attorney General Jeremiah W. Nixon of Missouri; Mayor Colette Lafuente of Poughkeepsie, NY; and Mary Beth Talley, who protected her friend Heather McDonald during the shooting at Wedgewood Baptist Church in Fort Worth, TX.

Statement on Signing Legislation Establishing Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park

October 21, 1999

I am pleased today to sign into law S. 323, which creates the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park in Colorado as America's 55th national park.

The Black Canyon, carved over eons by the unyielding waters of the Gunnison River, is a true natural treasure. Its nearly vertical walls, rising half a mile high, harbor one of the most spectacular stretches of wild river in America. No other canyon in North America combines the remarkable depth, narrowness, and sheerness of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison.

This bipartisan bill demonstrates once again that preserving our environment for future generations is a cause that transcends party lines. In that spirit, I urge Congress to fully fund my lands legacy initiative this year, and to work with me to secure permanent funding to continue these efforts well into the 21st century. Together, we can ensure that other treasures like the Black Canyon are preserved for all time.

Statement Commemorating the Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin

October 21, 1999

Four years ago today, according to the Hebrew calendar, Yitzhak Rabin was murdered by an assassin in Tel Aviv. He was a Prime Minister, a general, a diplomat, and a coura-

geous soldier in the battle for peace. All of us who were his friends still mourn his death.

Twelve days from now, world leaders will gather in Oslo to honor Yitzhak Rabin's memory. I will attend on behalf of the American people. It was in Oslo, 6 years ago, that Israelis and Palestinians made the crucial decision to try to work together to achieve peace. Now, Prime Minister Barak, Chairman Arafat, and I will come together in Oslo to build on that legacy and move closer to Rabin's goal: a permanent peace between Israel and the Palestinian people.

There is much hard work ahead, with difficult decisions for all sides. But as we look back in sorrow to mourn the passing of a great man, we must do everything in our power on behalf of the cause to which he gave his life.

Statement on House Action on Education Legislation

October 21, 1999

Making our schools work for all America's children is the most important challenge we face. By passing H.R. 2 today, the House took an important step toward improving educational opportunities for the Nation's most disadvantaged students. Although I have a number of concerns with this bill, I am pleased that H.R. 2 reflects a bipartisan consensus on several principles of the education reform plan I sent Congress earlier this year. As I said in my State of the Union Address, the Federal Government has a responsibility not only to invest more in our poorest schools, but to demand more results in return.

In particular, the bill continues the work of standards-based reform, expands public school choice, and recognizes the importance of holding schools accountable for results. I am pleased that a solid bipartisan majority in the House voted to reject the false promise of vouchers. I am also pleased that the House, by passing the Mink amendment, chose to incorporate gender equity provisions in this legislation.

As the reauthorization process continues, I will work with Congress to improve certain aspects of this bill, including provisions for

students with limited English proficiency, as well as provisions that target funds to our neediest students, increase the quality of Title I instructors, and ensure that accountability systems are workable. We have more work to do to enact a strong, comprehensive plan to hold schools accountable for results. I urge Congress to continue moving forward.

Proclamation 7243—National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence, 1999

October 21, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Events of the past year have dramatically demonstrated the continuing need for a National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence. In communities across our country, we saw young lives cut short by gunfire. We watched, horrified, as the same scene played out repeatedly in classrooms, school yards, and places of worship. Out of cities like Fort Worth, Texas; Conyers, Georgia; Granada Hills, California; and Littleton, Colorado, came the images that have become painfully familiar—racing ambulances, terrified children, grieving families. As a national community, we shared a sense of devastating loss too immediate to comprehend. Behind these headlines, every day in our Nation 12 young people die as a result of gun violence.

In response to this disturbing cycle, my Administration has taken comprehensive action against youth violence. Last October, we held the first-ever White House Conference on School Safety, where I launched a new initiative to increase the number of safety officers in schools and unveiled a new plan to help schools respond to violence. After the tragedy in Littleton, we held a Summit on Youth Violence at which we launched a national campaign to end youth violence.

Earlier this month, I established the White House Council on Youth Violence to ensure the effective coordination of the many agencies and programs of the Federal Government that address youth violence issues. In addition, we have selected 54 communities

to receive more than \$100 million in Safe Schools/Healthy Students grants in an effort to find and fund the best ideas to reduce youth violence through community-based collaborative efforts. These funds will allow communities to implement important measures such as hiring more security personnel, installing security equipment, and improving student mental health services.

I have also called upon the Congress to do its part by passing a juvenile crime bill that closes the dangerous gun show loophole, requires child safety locks for guns, and bans the importation of large-capacity ammunition clips. I will continue to fight hard to win passage of these commonsense measures to keep guns out of the wrong hands.

As we observe this year's National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence, I encourage every student in America to sign a Student Pledge Against Gun Violence, a solemn oath never to bring a gun to school and never to use a gun to settle a dispute. More than one million students signed the pledge last year, and I hope that many more will participate this year. I also urge all Americans to make their voices heard and support efforts to reduce gun violence. We need every sector of our society—families, educators, communities, businesses, religious leaders, policymakers, and members of law enforcement—to join together in this crusade to end the cycle of violence and create a brighter, safer future for our children.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 21, 1999, as a National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence. On this day, I call upon all Americans to commit themselves anew to helping our young people avoid violence, to setting a good example, and to restoring our schools and neighborhoods as safe havens for learning and recreation.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton